

TENNCARE ENROLLMENT AND ELIGIBILITY AS OF DECEMBER 1997 AND FEBRUARY 1998

- Statewide 1,208,334 persons were enrolled in TennCare as of February 1998.
- In the 1990 Census, about 37% of Tennessee's population was below 200% of poverty. A higher percentage of rural than metropolitan Tennessee residents were below poverty in 1989--39% compared to 34% in the four largest metropolitan counties.²⁹
- The highest percentage of the metropolitan population below poverty in 1989 resided in Shelby County (37%). Southwest and Upper Cumberland Regions, with 47% of the regional population below poverty each at baseline, were the rural regions with the highest poverty levels. Lowest poverty prevalence was observed for the Mid-Cumberland Region at 34% below poverty.
- Counties with the highest prevalence of poverty were Hancock (67%), Fentress (66%), Scott (62%), Johnson (61%), Grundy (60%), and Pickett (59%). Counties with the lowest prevalence of poverty were Williamson (16%), Wilson (23%), Rutherford (27%), Sumner (27%) and Cheatham (29%).
- Although some enrollees on TennCare are above 200% of poverty, comparisons of the TennCare enrollment population and population at less than 200% poverty can be made.
- A somewhat lower percentage of rural residents who were below 1989 poverty levels were enrolled in TennCare as of February 1998 (67% compared to 73% in metropolitan counties and 69% statewide).
- Of the 4 large metropolitan regions, Knox County had the lowest percentage of the poor enrolled in TennCare (61%), while Shelby and Davidson had the highest percentages (78% and 75% respectively). Hamilton County had 66% coverage.
- The nonmetropolitan region with the highest percentage of poverty population relative to TennCare enrollees was East Tennessee (73%), while the lowest was Northwest Tennessee (61%).
- Counties range in TennCare penetration or coverage rates from 51% in Giles and 52% in Weakley Counties to 82% in Scott and Meigs Counties.

²⁹Throughout this section, metropolitan regions include only the largest four counties. Population data for 1990 used to compute percentages are from The Health Access Plan Update, 1998, TDH.